



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **COUNTY VET CONFIRMS WEST NILE VIRUS FOUND IN HORSE** *Third Horse Diagnosed With WNV in San Diego County*

County Officials have confirmed that a third horse has been diagnosed with West Nile virus (WNV). The horse, a 15 year old gelding, is expected to recover. This brings the total 2006 WNV cases in San Diego County to three horses, 19 birds and two humans.

"It's not surprising that horses are becoming infected at this time of year," said County Veterinarian Dr. Nikos Gurfield. "San Diego has such mild weather. Potentially we have mosquitoes all year round. Horse owners should check with their veterinarians to ensure their horses are properly vaccinated and are receiving booster shots against this deadly disease."

This horse was one mile from the previous horse diagnosed with WNV in early December 2006. County Vector Control, who routinely surveys for mosquitoes and areas of standing water, will increase surveillance efforts in the Lakeside area.

Although West Nile virus is primarily a bird disease, it can be transmitted to humans and horses by infected mosquitoes. Approximately 30% of horses infected with the virus and who develop symptoms will die. Signs of the disease in horses include stumbling, staggering, wobbling, weakness, muscle twitching or inability to stand. Contact your veterinarian immediately if your horse has any of these symptoms. Currently, there are two types of horse vaccines against West Nile virus.

Protect yourself and your horses from mosquito bites by eliminating mosquito breeding sites around your home. Mosquito fish can be used in horse troughs, unused swimming pools, ponds and fountains to eat mosquito larvae. They are available free at 14 locations around the county. Avoid going outdoors at dawn and dusk, wear long sleeves and long pants when outside, and use insect repellent containing DEET, Picaridin or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus. Ensure that windows and screens are well-maintained to keep mosquitoes from getting inside your home.

For information on WNV, mosquito fish, or to report dead birds or mosquito breeding sites, please call County Vector Control at (888) 551-INFO (4636). You can also report dead birds on the County's West Nile virus Web site at [www.SDFightTheBite.com](http://www.SDFightTheBite.com).

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